

FAQs for OMB EA Assessment Version 2.0
February 7, 2006

Evidence / Artifacts in the EA Submission:

Question: What materials should be included in the quarterly updates to OMB?

Answer: Additional guidance addressing the quarterly assessments process will be published in the next month.

Question: What artifacts should be provided to show maturity levels?

Answer: See Appendix A of the EA Assessment Framework 2.0 Document (available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/egov/documents/OMB_EA_Assessment_Framework_2_FINAL.pdf) for examples and definitions of artifacts.

Question: When deciding which artifacts and work products to submit to OMB on Feb. 28, 2006, is OMB interested in only the items that have been updated since the last annual EA submission in May 2005?

Answer: No. Submit all EA work products and artifacts that are necessary to show evidence for the maturity levels in the assessment criteria. This includes new materials, updated materials, and materials unchanged since the last annual FEA assessment which occurred in May – June 2005.

Question: Should I submit only the EA work product or artifact justifying the highest level of maturity for a criterion? For example, if I've self-assessed at a Level 4 for Business Architecture, is it safe to conclude I do **not** need to provide the Baseline Business Architecture, which is required for Level 1 and Level 2?

Answer: No. Submit all EA work products and artifacts that are necessary to show evidence for each level of an assessment criterion. For example, if you have self-assessed at a Level 4 for a specific criterion, provide work products and artifacts to justify all levels up to and including Level 4.

Question: When terms such as strategic goals and performance measurement indicators are used in the assessment criteria, do these refer to goals and measures for just the EA program, or for the overall agency?

Answer: All strategy, performance measurement indicators, or similar information required for the assessment criteria are referring to agency strategy and performance, **not** to the specific strategy and performance of just the EA program.

Question: Do I have to submit work products that are named and formatted exactly like those identified in the assessment criteria and in Appendix A of the EA Assessment Framework Version 2.0 document?

Answer: Submitted EA work products or documents do not have to be named or organized exactly as those in the assessment, **however**, OMB reviewers will be looking for the content identified in the assessment criteria (sections 1.3, 1.4, 1.5) and described in Appendices A and B of the assessment document. For example, if an agency has already documented a baseline architecture including the baseline performance, business, data, service component, and technology architectures, it is not necessary to separate these architectures into separate documents for the submission, as long as the location of the information is clearly identified for each criteria in the self-assessment (e.g., section number and/or page number in a larger document).

Question: On page 29 of the Assessment Framework 2.0 document, the Service Component Architecture is described. The second bullet under the "examples of elements that may be included" is "Component Interfaces". Please provide details and an example of what should be provided here.

Answer: Generally, an 'interface' is defined as a connection (planned or actual) between two processes, components, services, applications, or devices (or any combination of these). An interface will typically include a formal definition of the inputs, communication protocol, outputs, sender, and receiver. For EA, an agency needs only to document interfaces for which a documented business requirement exists (as opposed to every interface exposed by a given application, product, etc.). Typically, a node diagram or similar work product is necessary to clearly map interfaces between service components and/or applications (for technology interfaces), and between stakeholders and business processes (for user interfaces).

A service component architecture should include well-defined interfaces for accessing service components. Some specific examples include: a standardized interface for accessing enterprise-wide services, such as an enterprise service bus (ESB); API documentation for reusable software components, and Web Services Description Language (WSDL) interface definitions for XML web services, published to a Universal Description, Discovery, and Integration (UDDI) directory.

IPv6 Transition:

Question: How should the IPv6 transition plan be incorporated into the assessment?

Answer: Agencies that **do** have an enterprise architecture should submit the following artifacts for IPv6 review:

- IRM Strategic Plan
- EA Transition Strategy
- IPv6 Progress Report

Small agencies that do **not** have an enterprise architecture should submit the following artifacts for IPv6 review:

- IPv6 Transition Plan
- IPv6 Progress Report

Memorandum M-05-22 requires each agency to create an IPv6 transition plan. However, as was written in Chapter 1 of the IPv6 guidance ("Integrating IPv6 into Agency EA Planning"), OMB is not going to require agencies to submit it separately with their EA assessment. Instead, scorecard agencies should make sure they submit their EA Transition Strategy and IPv6 Progress Report. The EA Transition Strategy must include the IPv6 transition milestones inherent in the agency's IPv6 transition plan. Essentially, the agency's internal IPv6 transition plan should be integrated into the agency's EA Transition Strategy.

Agencies that **do not** have an enterprise architecture – and therefore, do not have an EA Transition Strategy – should send OMB their IPv6 Transition Plan and IPv6 Progress Report. OMB will use the IPv6 Transition Plan document to identify IPv6 milestones and program interdependencies.

Question: For the 'IPv6 Planning' criterion, Level 3 requires an Impact Analysis (due June 30, 2006 according to OMB M-05-22), while Level 4 requires an IPv6 Transition Plan (due 4 months earlier, on Feb. 28, 2006 according to OMB M-05-22) – the deadlines here seem backwards.

Answer: Agencies submitting a complete EA Transition Strategy, which includes IPv6 transition milestones and interdependencies, will be granted credit for Level 4 of the 'IPv6 Planning' criterion. The FEA PMO acknowledges that the Impact Analysis is not due until June 30, 2006.

EA Transition Strategy:

Question: Should the EA transition strategy include all major IT investments, or only those major IT investments with DM&E funding?

Answer: At a minimum, the EA Transition Strategy should include all major IT investments, regardless of whether they include DM&E funding. See Appendix B of the EA Assessment Framework 2.0 Document (available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/egov/documents/OMB_EA_Assessment_Framework_2_FINAL.pdf) for more information on EA Transition Strategy.

Question: How far back should the EA transition strategy go in terms of including transition tasks?

Answer: At a minimum, the sequencing plan in the EA transition strategy should include tasks with an end date occurring in the current fiscal year or later. For example, the EA transition strategy included with the February 28, 2006 agency EA submission should include all transition tasks with an end date occurring October 1, 2005 or later. However, agencies are welcome to include transition tasks occurring in previous years to provide additional context, if desired.

Question: What is the process to re-baseline tasks and milestones as priorities and investments change?

Answer: Please refer to OMB Circular A-11 (http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a11/current_year/a_11_2005.pdf) and OMB Memorandum 05-23 (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/memoranda/fy2005/m05-23.pdf>).

Other EA Self-Assessment Questions:

Question: Which file on the FEA Assessment web page (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/egov/a-2-EAAssessment.html>) should I use for the EA self-assessment?

Answer: There are two files in excel format posted on the FEA web page. Both have been contributed by federal agencies and are being shared through the FEA website to assist other agencies with their EA self-assessments. Either file may be completed and submitted as an agency's EA self assessment. It is not necessary to complete and submit both files.

Question: Assessment criteria levels range from 0 to 5. In the case where an agency meets all the requirements outlined for a particular level and meets some requirements for the next level, can the agency receive partial credit for meeting a portion of the requirements at the next higher level? For example, if all the requirements for Level 2 are met and half the requirements for Level 3 are met, can the agency self-assess at a 2.5?

Answer: No. The value ranges for specific assessment criteria are limited to whole numbers only. For the example in this question, the assessment would be at Level 2 for this criterion. Only averages calculated for the Completion, Use, and Results sections of the assessment will not be expressed as whole numbers.